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Catholic Charismatics Today

AMADO S. CRUZ, S.J.

The Roman Catholic Charismatics, as they prefer to be called, started in the universities. Duquesne, first, in Pittsburgh, and from there to Notre Dame, then Michigan State, Iowa State and Holy Cross. Thus, from the very beginning involved in the movement were university professors, graduate students and undergraduate students. The first members were laymen who up to now are still spearheading the movement. From the universities, the movement spread to parishes and to religious houses including the cloistered houses of nuns and monks.¹

No reliable statistics of membership are available but from what can be gleaned from the attendance at the national convention held at Notre Dame each year, the growth of the movement has been spectacular. In 1968, there were 100 in attendance; in 1969, 500; 1,300 in 1970; 5,000 in 1971;² and last June, there were over 11,000.³

Why this phenomenal growth? The reason seems to be because it answers a deep need in the lives of contemporary Catholics. The two lay faculty members of Duquesne exemplified this need. In the fall of 1966, these two men "were drawn together in a period of deep prayer and discussion about the vitality of their faith-life." They "felt there was something lacking in their individual Christian lives . . . a certain emptiness, a lack of dynamism." They knew their Catholic faith well; they knew their re-

1. Killian McDonnell, O.S.B., "Catholic Pentecostalism: Problems in Evaluation," *Theological Digest* XIX (Spring 1971), p. 48.

2. Killian McDonnell, O.S.B., "Catholic Charismatics," *Commonweal* (May 5, 1972), p. 207.

3. Kevin Ranaghan, "Origins and Growth of the Charismatic Renewal," *Commonweal* (September 2, 1972), p. 828.

sponsibilities as Christians, "but for some reason that pervading awareness of living in (Christ) here and now was missing." "The two men (then) . . . began to pray that the Holy Spirit of Christ would renew in them all the graces of their baptism and confirmation; that He would fill, with the powerful life of the risen Lord, the vacuum left by human effort."⁴ They wanted to experience God in their lives. They "hunger for God."⁵ Pentecostalism promises to answer this need, and from all indications, it makes good this promise.⁶ "The movement has been able to show that God is not only present but he is effectively present and real in that place where we are real . . ."⁷ Testimonies by the people in the movement confirm these observations by Father McDonnell.⁸

Today, the Catholic Charismatics can be found all over the United States, in Canada, in Europe and also in other countries.⁹ In America, they form independent prayer groups and communities, the most famous of which, is The Word of God Community at Ann Arbor.

The suspicion of the majority of Catholics, however, towards them still remains. This is understandable considering that the movement is in the direct line¹⁰ of Classical Pentecostalism which "conjures up (in the popular mind) images of emotionalism, fanaticism, religious mania, illiteracy, anti-intellectualism, messianic posturing, panting after miracles." Moreover, many Americans "find socially unacceptable the religious phenomena of the Pentecostal movement as a threat to the

4. Kevin Ranaghan, "Revival Under the Dome," *Catholics and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Los Angeles: Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International), pp. 6-13.

5. McDonnell, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

6. Killian McDonnell, O.S.B., "Pentecostals and the Holy Spirit," *Sisters Today* 40 (May 1969), pp. 504-505.

7. McDonnell, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

8. See *New Covenant* 1 (March 1972); *Catholics and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Los Angeles: Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International).

9. Ranaghan, *op. cit.*, p. 828.

10. Edwin O'Connor, C.S.C., "Pentecost and Catholicism," *Ecumenist* 6 (July-August 1968), p. 162.

structural Church, either because the movement seems to be operating outside the jurisdictional boundaries of the Church or because the movement seems to indict the Church for lacking the gifts of the Spirit."¹¹ And, finally, Catholics distrust religious experience, a heritage from the era of John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila whose "contemporaries claiming to have had religious experiences were later proved to have been either dupes or impostors."¹²

The Catholic Charismatics fortunately had, from the very beginning, men with theological competence "who began in May 1969 to meet once a year to work out the theology of the Pentecostal experience within the Roman Catholic Context."¹³ One such man is Father Edward D. O'Connor, C.S.C., who has a doctorate in theology. He teaches dogmatic theology at Notre Dame and has been with the movement since it reached South Bend from Pittsburgh. In his articles, he gives theological assessments of the movement and at the same time pleads for open-mindedness among Catholics who view the movement with suspicion. In "Pentecost and Catholicism", an article which appeared in *Ecumenist*, he tries to answer one common objection by Catholics: "If this movement is truly inspired by the Holy Spirit and is capable of contributing to a renewal of Catholic spirituality, why did it originate outside the Church and come to her from without?"¹⁴

Father O'Connor does not deny that the movement originated from outside the Catholic Church. This is clear to one familiar with the movement.

This is evident from the charismatic activity, the experience of the "baptism of the Spirit" and numerous tiny tokens of kinship that are obvious to anyone familiar with the movement. Furthermore, most Catholics have received the Pentecostal experience through the intermediary of a non-Catholic Pentecostal. John Sherill's book, *They Speak in Other Tongues*, was the seed from which the movement at Duquesne was engendered. In Boston, Rochester, South Bend, Cincinnati and many other places, it was

11. McDonnell, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

12. Killian McDonnell, O.S.B., "Holy Spirit and Pentecostalism," *Commonweal* (November 8, 1968), p. 203.

13. McDonnell, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

14. O'Connor, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

through a non-denominational Pentecostal association known as the Full Gospel Business Men that Catholics first encountered this new activity of the Spirit. In Cincinnati, Washington D.C., Pittsburgh and elsewhere, it was through the prayers — of neighbors and prayer groups of other denominations, or of no denomination at all — that Catholics have received the “baptism of the Holy Spirit”. There is no denying the fact that the Pentecostal movement originated outside the Roman Catholic Church and subsequently entered into it.¹⁵

But why did God allow this thing to happen? Father O'Connor lines up three possible reasons:

The first is that this may be God's way of demonstrating to members of the Church that he alone is sovereign Lord, and that all institutions and hierarchs on earth, even in the Church, are nothing but instruments and ministers. Everyone professes to know that God is free to use whatever instruments he pleases, that he is not confined to the sacraments or other institutions of the ecclesiastical structure that he himself has created. Nevertheless we Catholics tend to get uneasy when he exercises this freedom, because our faith in the power and sacredness of these structures so easily changes into the implicit supposition that the Church is the manager of the grace of God.

In the second place, those who have the support of the institutional Church and the grace of the sacraments have a special need of manifest signs from God . . .

Finally, it may also be that those who lack the doctrinal and sacramental riches of the institutional Church often make up for it by the liveliness of their faith and the hunger of their hearts, whereas those who repose comfortably in the bosom of the Church have grown tepid. . . . Faith does not allow us to admit that the Church as a whole can ever be rejected by God. Nevertheless, we dare not assume that there is no meaning for us in the warning that Christ addressed to his contemporaries: “Many will come from the east and the west, and will feast with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom will be put forth into the darkness outside (Mt. 8, 11f).”¹⁶

In another article entitled “To Roman Catholic Priests Enquiring about the Pentecostal Movement”, Father O'Connor in answering the same objection mentioned above referred to *Lumen Gentium*, (N. 15), which states that non-Catholic Christians “are in some real way joined with us in the Holy Spirit, for to them also he gives his gifts and graces, and is thereby operative among them with his sanctifying power.” To another objection that “Pentecostal spirit is too emotional”, he responds:

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*

These Churches (do not have) the sacraments and the liturgy that we have; they have almost nothing else but the wonderful experience of the presence of God which has profoundly affected them, and which they seek to refresh and to communicate by every possible means. And, in fact, where the Pentecostal Movement has reached Catholics, it has been far more calm in its manifestations. On the other hand, is it not possible that we Catholics (especially in the Anglo-American world) have been unnaturally unemotional in our style of worship? Why should people not be deeply moved at the moment when God floods them with the wonderful sense of his presence and goodness?¹⁷

The other apprehension of Catholics we mentioned above is the tendency of pentecostalism towards divisiveness. Where this has been historically true with Classical Pentecostalism, this does not seem to be true with the Catholic Charismatics.¹⁸ Father McDonnell writes:

The (Roman Catholic) Pentecostals have, if anything, found themselves more attached to the structural Church after their involvement in the movement than before. Especially the early university recruits, before their involvement, were critical of the Church, the bishops, and ecclesiastical structures. While many of them remain critical, their attitudes after the experience tend rather toward compassion for those in positions of authority and understanding for structural processes.¹⁹

Other objects of apprehension are the gift of "tongues" and "baptism in the Holy Spirit." Unless they can be satisfactorily explained, it will be difficult to be open-minded with the Catholic Charismatics. The gift of tongues or glossolalia smacks of being abnormal behavior. It is not sufficient to point to the Acts of the Apostles and to the Letters of Paul and give them as justification. In this day and age of psychological sophistication, glossolalia must pass the gauntlet of psychological testing.

In the late 60's, a group of social scientists studied the dynamics of the Pentecostal movement as a movement. Their methodology was principally participant observation. One of the questions they asked themselves was whether the people who claim to have the gift of tongues are abnormal. The result was

17. Edwin O'Connor, C.S.C., "To Roman Catholic Priests Enquiring About the Movement," *One in Christ* 4 (1971), p. 403.

18. O'Connor, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

19. McDonnell, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.

negative. Here is the report of Virginia Hine, one of the social scientists:

Four recent studies, using reliable and widely accepted psychological tests have been conducted, three with long-established traditional Pentecostal groups and one with neo-Pentecostals. In none of these studies has it been shown that Pentecostal glossolalics as a group are more psychotic or neurotic than the control groups or the societal norms.

Quite clearly available evidence requires that an explanation of glossolalia as pathological must be discarded. Even among those who accept this position, however, there often remains a sort of non-specific suspicion of emotional immaturity, of sub-clinical anxiety, or of some form of personal inadequacy. . . . As yet there is no empirical scientific evidence for this interpretation of glossolalia.

Another psychological theory that is commonly used to explain the occurrence of glossolalia, but which assumes no pathology, is that of suggestibility or pre-disposition to hypnosis. . . . Until we know more about the relationship between suggestibility and type of group interaction, and can measure the degree of suggestibility more accurately, generalizations about glossolalics as suggestible individuals do not seem either useful or supported by available data.²⁰

William Samarin agrees with Hine's conclusion that glossolalics are not more psychologically abnormal than ordinary people. The question, however, he addresses himself to is: "If we refuse to accept a supernatural, external cause, can we explain why a person begins to speak in tongues?" And he answers in the positive. Samarin says that "the speaker of tongues uses a tool — the ability to mimic and play with language — that has lain dormant since childhood. He does so voluntarily — he learns to speak nonsense for personal and social reasons."²¹ And he explains further what he means by this.

There are actually two assumptions in the question: first, that the phenomenon is not supernatural and, second, that it has a natural explanation. Samarin gives the impression that the two are contradictory. Another author, however, claims they are not contradictory. Morton Kelsey, a faculty member of Notre Dame,

20. Virginia Hine, "Pentecostal Glossolalia: Toward a Functional Interpretation," *Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion* 8 (1969), pp. 214, 217, 218. Quoted by Francis Sullivan, S.J., "The Pentecostal Movement," *Gregorianum* 53/2 (1972), pp. 257–258.

21. William Samarin, "Glossolalia," *Psychology Today* (August 1972), p. 78.

has studied the phenomenon of glossolalia for years and has written a book on it.²² Two years ago, he wrote the article "Speaking in Tongues in 1971: An Assessment of Its Meaning and Value" for the *Review for Religious*. In this article, he wrote that

from a psychological point of view the experience of tongues can be better explained as similar in nature to the dreams or vision, in which contents arise from somewhere besides the outer physical world and take possession of consciousness either in sleep or waking. The recent scientific research on the nature of dreams shows the healing function of dreams and the fact that they arise from some other immediate source than physical stimulation. If it can be imagined that the source of this stimulation might be what Carl Jung has described as the collective unconscious or objective psyche, or to use theological words, the realm of the spirit, then both tongues and dreams might be seen as a breakthrough of spiritual reality into the ordinary, humdrum human life. If this is the case, as Victor White suggests in his book *God and the Unconscious*, then it is quite plausible that neither tongues nor the other gifts of the spirit are absurd. Quite a different point of view about the whole charismatic life of the Church may be indicated for modern men once it is believed that God can break directly into the human psyche.²³

We may agree with Samarín that glossolalia has a natural explanation, we may even accept the possibility that he has a better explanation than Kelsey, but we hold that the phenomenon without ceasing to have a natural explanation can also have a supernatural explanation. Ultimately, I suppose, the stand one takes depends on the faith-stance of the observer.

As for "baptism in the Holy Spirit", it refers to that

distinct experience subsequent to conversion, not strictly necessary for salvation, but which every sincere Christian can hope for and should strive to obtain by obedience to God, faith, and persevering prayer. This is understood as each believer's personal "pentecost", in which he receives, as the first disciples did, the gift of the Holy Spirit, Himself, bringing power to witness to Christ by his words and the example of his Christian life. . . . They find justification for these beliefs in the passages of *Acts* that describes the several descents of the Spirit on various groups of disciples (*Acts* 2, 1-12; 8, 14-24; 10, 44-48; 19, 1-7).²⁴

22. Morton Kelsey, *Tongue Speaking: an Experiment in Spiritual Experience*, published in 1964.

23. Morton Kelsey, "Speaking in Tongues in 1971: an Assessment of its Meaning and Value," *Review for Religious* 30 (1971), pp. 252-253.

24. Sullivan, *op. cit.*, p. 247. Unlike the non-Catholic pentecostals, the Catholic Charismatics place more emphasis on the Pauline writings which

Catholic Charismatics claim that the Holy Spirit is active in the life of the Church today more than ever and he visits the lives of those who sincerely seek him and fills them with his power. How do they reconcile "baptism in the Spirit" with the sacraments of baptism and confirmation? They maintain that the former does not go against the Catholic doctrine that a person receives the Holy Spirit in both baptism and confirmation. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is not a new sacrament at all. "The gesture of the 'laying on of hands' which often accompanies [it] is not a new sacramental rite, but rather a fraternal gesture of love and concern."²⁵ What they experience is a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit in their lives "by making his presence, previously a matter of faith, now a matter of experience; by new manifestations of his working in (the persons') lives; by a striking increase of (their) power to hear Christian witness",²⁶ and often accompanied by glossolalia.²⁷

At first, Catholic Charismatics tended to look at the "baptism in the Holy Spirit" as a "commitment act" which was made once and for all. Nowadays, it is still viewed as a commitment act but not as an "isolated experience". "[T]he tendency now is to see it as a manner of entering into a new relationship with the Holy Spirit so that one can hear the Gospel with a new sensitivity and orient one's life more clearly toward Christ. The emphasis is, then, less on the Spirit alone and more on the basic Christian message and conversion."²⁸

I don't think this can be faulted theologically.

If the experience is valid, the terminology, as Fathers Tugwell and Sullivan have pointed out, is unfortunate. Not only does it bring up the problem of reconciling it with baptism and confirmation we mentioned above, but also makes Catholic Charismatics appear guilty of spiritual pride by seeming to appropriate to

place charisms at the service of the Church. E.g. 1 Cor. 12-14; Eph. 4; Rom 12. See Ranaghan, *op. cit.*, p. 829.

25. Ranaghan, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

26. Sullivan, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

27. Ranaghan, *op. cit.*, p. 11; McDonnell, *op. cit.*, p. 503.

28. McDonnell, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

themselves alone special manifestation of the Holy Spirit.²⁹

Is the Catholic Charismatic movement then a work of the Holy Spirit?³⁰ Any answer to this question, whether an affirmative or a negative answer, will rely on the validity of the criterion chosen. In Matthew 7,16 we read "By their fruits you will know them" and Galatians 5,22-23 provides us with a list of the fruits of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control".

To answer this question we shall take the testimony of Father Killian McDonnell, O.S.B., Director of the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research of St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota, a doctor of theology, and a participant in the anthropological study of the dynamics of the pentecostal movement as movement which we mentioned earlier. We are, therefore, taking the testimony of an outside observer who does not have personal experience of glossolalia or of "baptism in the Spirit". In "Catholic Pentecostalism: Problems in Evaluation," he writes

My field research has not indicated that Pentecostal people are psychologically deprived. Rather they tend to be generous and outgoing, at home with themselves psychologically. Catholic Pentecostals often return to practices they had abandoned: rosary, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, devotion to Mary. This is not due to a conservatively oriented theology, but rather to the transforming effect of the experience. They experience a real hunger for God and seek to satisfy it by all the avenues of contact within their religious history. Some return to the practice of frequent confession and daily Mass and Communion. The whole of the Church's sacramental and liturgical life becomes more meaningful and they tend to work out the theology of Pentecostalism in a sacramental and liturgical context. Many of them testify that for the first time reading the Bible has become a surprising delight. There seems to be a new moral earnestness, the healing of wounded interpersonal relationships, and progress in solving marriage problems, alcoholism, and drug addiction. In some instances the problems seem to be permanently solved; in other instances the problems return.³¹

29. Sullivan, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 258 f. Fr. Sullivan argues and, I think, correctly that we cannot say that the Catholic Charismatic movement, which is just about 5 years old, is a work of the Holy Spirit without also admitting that the whole pentecostal movement, which is over 70 years old, is a work of the Holy Spirit since after all the Catholic Charismatics are a part of the pentecostal movement.

31. McDonnell, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

The evidence, then, seems to point to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is at work in the Catholic Charismatic movement.

What then is the essence of the movement?

Its essence and the source of all its energy, is the experience of the action of the Holy Spirit. This occurs at two levels, which might be called the charismatic and the contemplative. Charismatic, in that the charisms witnessed in the early Church and discussed by St. Paul have reappeared. The most widespread of these is *glossolalia*, i.e., being inspired to speak in a language one has never learned. Usually this is a medium of prayer, but occasionally it also becomes the vehicle of a message for the Christian community. . . .

In truth, however, [these charisms] are not nearly so important as the other level of the Spirit's activity, which consists in bringing people to a personal encounter with God, a deep and moving experience of his presence and love that fills them with a new peace and joy and arouses in them a lively and affective love for God and neighbor and a hunger for giving praise to God. It is hard to list these effects without seeming either banal or academic, because they are nothing other than what Christianity has always preached and promised; but anyone who has seen the spirit transform human lives from tepid to ardent, and from sin to the obedience of Jesus Christ, can hardly remain unmoved at the might with which the hand of God is once again active in our own days.³²

Our discussion has so far shown that the Catholic Charismatic movement arose in answer to a need to experience God in one's life, that the movement seems to deliver what it promises, that, consequently, after the "baptism in the Holy Spirit," faith becomes more operative in the lives of the persons involved and, finally, that the Holy Spirit, therefore, seems to be working in the movement. Granted all these, why has the Holy Spirit brought about the movement? What is he saying to the Church and to the world?

Some of the authors seem to imply that the movement was in a way foreshadowed by the prayer of Pope John XXIII in the Apostolic Constitution, *Humanae Salutis*, convoking the Second Vatican Council and by the Council's teaching on charisms in the Church.

At the end of *Humanae Salutis*, Pope John prayed to the Holy Spirit: "Renew Your wonders in our time, as though for a new

32. O'Connor, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

Pentecost, and grant that the Holy Church . . . may increase the reign of peace and love.”³³

As for Vatican II, the Council, in many places, affirms that the Holy Spirit who has been sent by the Father to “forever sanctify the Church” still continues to pour extraordinary and ordinary gifts on her members.³⁴ These Council statements seem to correct the dispensational view,³⁵ the notion that the extraordinary gifts God poured into the early Christian community, of which we read in the Acts and in the Pauline Epistles, were temporary and ended with the earliest stage of Christianity.

Cardinal Suenens, who was primarily responsible for the inclusion in *Lumen Gentium* (N. 12) of the statement that the charisms given by the Holy Spirit mentioned in the New Testament are still operative in the Church up to now, thinks that the 70’s will be the decade of the “increase of spirituality”, “an opening to the Holy Spirit in prayer”, just as the 60’s were dominated by concerns regarding “organizational or structural problems”. “You have to walk on both feet — one on the ground (this represents the institutional side of things) and one in the air, so to speak (the charismatic), if you wish to move. One must strike a good balance between the two. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of both continuity and creativity and we need both.”³⁶ Do we then have in the Catholic Charismatic movement a prelude of what the Holy Spirit will bring about in the 70’s?

In a fine article written in *America*, Father Thomas E. Clarke sees in the Catholic Charismatics a certain “style” in the American Catholic scene which serves as an antithesis to another Christian “style” which stresses more the experience of God in his absence in the secular world. Towards the end of the article, he expresses the hope that the two Christian “styles” may dialogue together and profit from one another, thus implying that neither “style”

33. Pope John XXIII, “*Humanae Salutis*,” *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter Abbot, S.J., (New York: Corpus Books, 1966), p. 709.

34. Cf. *Lumen Gentium* Nn. 4, 12, 15, 34; also *Apostolican Actuositatem* N. 3.

35. Kelsey, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

36. L. J. Cardinal Suenens, “A New Charismatic Age,” *America* (May 13, 1972), pp. 503–505.

will be the wave of the future but will result in a Christian "style" which is a synthesis of both.³⁷

Another explanation about the Catholic Charismatics seems to be implied by Father McDonnell in his analysis of the reasons why Catholics join the movement. We have touched on this topic before but let us treat it more fully. Father McDonnell writes:

Pentecostals offer not a doctrine, but an experience of God. For persons brought up within the tradition of an arid intellect-and-will, catechism-Catholicism and within the ambience of a raging objectivism (in liturgy, piety, prayer, law), an experience of God in the Pentecostal sense can be the discovery of a new dimension in life. Beyond that, Pentecostals promise that the experience of God will be power-generating, so that one's whole life will be transformed. The immediacy of the presence of the reality of his love, the power of his mercy, the clarity of his voice in his word are all so real that they see God active in their personal history. . . . *Pentecostalism in any of its forms is an attempt to reach behind the formalities and structures which sacramentalize the original Christian experience and to recapture the original experience itself without the visible sacrament*³⁸ (italics supplied).

What Catholics want is to know God in the biblical sense. "In the Biblical framework, all knowledge was acquired experientially and the knowledge one could have of God did not escape this law. To know God was to experience him."³⁹ The fact that Catholics, in significant numbers, have discovered and are discovering God outside the Church's institutional "cult, creed, and code" seems to imply that we have over-institutionalized our "cult, creed, and code" to the extent that it tends to stifle the activity of the Holy Spirit whose mission is to be the source of life of Christ's Church on earth.

The people who are attracted to the movement are not nominal Catholics, but those who seriously want to live the fullness of the implications of their baptism and confirmation.⁴⁰ Their experience, therefore, is to be taken seriously. One sometimes gets the impression that the best fruit of the movement is the fact that the participants have returned to their traditional practices

37. Thomas Clarke, S.J., "Two Christian Styles," *America* (February 20, 1971), pp. 177-178.

38. McDonnell, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

39. McDonnell, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

40. Ranaghan, *op. cit.*, p. 828.

of going to the sacraments more frequently and praying the rosary. That this has happened is doubtless true, but more important than this fruit, it seems to me, is the fact that because they have experienced God, they would be challenged to preserve and nourish this experience by the creation of new structures, structures precisely which are necessary helps to make them more and more receptive of the sacramental life of the Church, the fruit we mentioned above.

Have the Catholic Charismatics created these new structures yet? I cannot say whether they have succeeded, but it cannot be denied that they are creating new structures in the Church. The first participants of their own accord instinctively started creating prayer groups. This was primarily to satisfy their need for prayer and at the same time to create a structure by which they could preserve the experience of God. The current *Directory of Catholic Charismatic Prayer Groups* published annually by the Communication Center at Notre Dame lists 350 such groups, most of whom can be found in the United States and Canada.⁴¹ There were many instances where beginning prayer groups had folded up because they did not have an instruction program. Those which have survived look up to the Charismatic Communities at Ann Arbor and Notre Dame, which have the most developed instruction programs, as possible models.⁴²

Are these communities going to be future models of Catholic communities in the world? Nobody knows the answer mainly because they are still evolving communities. What seems to be clear is that they do not seem to fit in very well with the bigger parish community.⁴³ And what also seems to be clear is that these communities radiate what we read in the Acts about the early Christians' *koinonia* and *diakonia*.⁴⁴ Moreover, the parish, we now have, seems to have deviated from what it originally was.

41. Sullivan, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

42. See J. C. Haughey, S.J., "The Jesus People of Ann Arbor," *America* (February 12, 1972), pp. 142-145; Daniel Danielson, "A Community of Pentecostals," *Sisters Today* (December 1971), pp. 215-224.

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Ibid.*

Emile Pin's study⁴⁵ shows that a parish was originally a true community, where the people knew one another and had face-to-face contact with one another. This is no longer true with the modern parish; for a modern parish is actually made up of several communities. And it is precisely because many people today no longer find meaningful community worship in the parish that both in Europe and America we witness the proliferation of parlor prayer groups. (In fact, the Catholic Charismatics at South Bend are in the direct line of such prayer groups.)⁴⁶ It is clear that the Catholic Charismatic community better reflects the original idea of a parish than the modern parish. And who today does not long for a local community that can best reflect the bigger community, the Church?

Another structural change which they are evolving seems to be that of a de-clericalized Church. This must not be taken to mean that priests have no roles in the movement. In fact, where there is a priest in the prayer group, he usually is the leader. But these laymen exercise their co-leadership with the priest as they should so that the movement as a whole seems to be a sign pointing to a future de-clericalized Church.

There may be other structural changes the Catholic Charismatics are introducing, but these two are, for me, the most important ones. Probably, a third we should include is their manner of evangelization. They are developing a style of proclaiming the good news that echoes the direct proclamations of Peter and the first disciples that speak more to the heart than to the intellect.⁴⁷

The attempted explanations we have enumerated for the phenomenon of the Catholic Charismatics are perhaps false, but certainly inadequate and we may have missed thus far the real explanation, but that God's finger is on the movement seems to be clear.

What does the American institutional Church think of the

45. Emile Pin, "The Church as a Way of Being Together," *SPES File 4* (November 1969), pp. 1-15. This article was originally published in no. 58 of the magazine *Christus*.

46. Ranaghan, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

47. McDonnell, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

movement? Twice the Bishops have scrutinized the movement — the first time in 1969 by the Committee on Doctrine and the second time in 1972 by the Committee on Pastoral Research and Practice. In their reports, both Committees expressed “cautious approval”.⁴⁸ Let us end by quoting the conclusion of the 1969 report:

It is the conclusion of the Committee on Doctrine that the movement should at this point not be inhibited, but allowed to develop. Certain cautions, however, must be expressed. Proper supervision can be effectively exercised only if the Bishops keep in mind their pastoral responsibility to oversee and guide this movement in the Church. We must be on guard that they avoid the mistakes of Classic Pentecostalism. It must be recognized that in our culture there is a tendency to substitute religious experience for religious doctrine. In practice we recommend that Bishops involved prudent priests to be associated with this movement. Such involvement and guidance would be welcomed by the Catholic Pentecostals.⁴⁹

48. Ranaghan, *op. cit.*, p. 829.

49. “A Report of the Committee on Doctrine of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (U.S.A.),” *One in Christ* 4 (1971), pp. 398–400.